



The Role of Family and Peer Representatives in Your CRCG

What is a family or peer representative?

Family and peer representatives are members of CRCGs who have experiences with physical, emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges, knowledge of the CRCG process, and are available to help the individual and family by:

- Explaining the CRCG process and preparing them for their meeting.
- Answering their questions.
- Supporting them during the meeting.
- Helping ensure that the individual service plan (ISP) fits their strengths and needs.

How are family and peer representatives involved in the CRCG?

Family and peer representatives are members of the CRCG, and their role is to support the individual and family throughout the CRCG process. As a person with lived experience, they understand the process and what it is like to be the individual or family seeking support and services. They can walk the individual and family through the process, ensure their voices are listened to, help get their needs met, answer questions, and reassure them that they are not alone. The next page outlines example responsibilities that a family and peer representative may have within each step of the CRCG process.

Why is it important to have a family or peer representative in your CRCG?

A family or peer representative is a vital member of the CRCG. They help support the individual and family, ensure that their voice is heard throughout the process, and empower their engagement in the creation and implementation of their service plan. Having a person with lived experience alongside the individual or family throughout the whole process can ease the stress and help them feel comfortable to share their experience with the CRCG.

How to support family and peer representatives?

It is important for the CRCG to provide resources, support, and training on roles and responsibilities to all members, including their family and peer representatives. Clearly outlined roles help maintain the balance between the family and peer representatives' advocacy for the individual and family and the other CRCG members' ability to provide services. Provide this informational sheet to your members and refer them to the ["Strengthening Your CRCG with Family Representation" webinar](#) and Module 2: Leader and Member Roles and Responsibilities of the online CRCG Training Toolkit.

Where to find family and peer representatives?

- Local Mental/Behavioral Health Authorities employ certified family partners.
- Agency members may know of a family member or a person formally served by the CRCG who may be interested in serving on the CRCG.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or other advocacy organizations that represent families.



Community Resource Coordination Groups of Texas

Examples of Family and Peer Representatives Responsibilities

Family and peer representative responsibilities may vary depending on the CRCG, but their primary role is to support individuals and families through the CRCG process. The family or peer representative should introduce themselves as someone who has similar lived experience and work to establish a supportive relationship with the individual or family. Potential responsibilities that a family or peer representative may have within each step of the CRCG process are listed below.

Referral

- If assigned to complete the referral, help the individual or family understand any forms that need to be completed or signed such as the referral form and confidentiality agreement. Outline what information is being asked for and explain the reason for each section.

Prepare for the CRCG Meeting

- Explain the CRCG process to the individual or family and describe what to expect at the meeting, including who will be there. Provide a copy of the [Information for Your CRCG Meeting](#) to help outline what to expect at the meeting.
- Help them think through what they are going to tell the CRCG and questions to ask.
- Ask how to best support them in the meeting. Discuss:
 - Concerns about the staffing.
 - Language or circumstances that might be re-traumatizing.
 - Plan a method, like a signal, for the individual to let someone know they are overwhelmed or not feeling okay about the meeting as it progresses.
 - Ask what would be helpful from an emotional and outcomes perspective.
- Prepare them with the logistics of the meeting like ensuring that the location of the meeting is accessible and explore any meeting barriers the family might have (i.e., transportation).

During the CRCG Meeting

- Greet the individual or family and sit with them in the meeting room. If the meeting is virtual, sign in as "Family Representative – Name" so they can easily identify the representative.
- Utilize trauma-informed practices and intentionally create a safe space for discussion. Refer to the [Tips to Make Your CRCG Trauma-Informed](#) resource.
- If needed, assist with helping explain their immediate needs.
- Maintain a strengths-based approach by using positive language.
- Clarify what to expect and next steps after the meeting.
- Accompany the individual or family from the meeting room after the meeting ends.

Follow Up

- On the ISP, a lead contact (typically the referring agency) will be assigned to support implementation of the plan, if assigned as the lead contact, connect with the individual or family and ensure that they understand their ISP and next steps. Assist with linking them to the resources listed in their plan and provide additional resources as needed.